

**RE: HB6557 AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR THE RECREATIONAL USE OF LANDS.**

**Submitted by: The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board**

Dear Co-Chairs Coleman and Fox, and Committee members,

The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board voted to support HB6557.

The Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board has formally endorsed the campaign to reform the state Recreational Land Use Act to provide municipal and quasi-public owners of land the same limited immunity from liability as is currently extended to state and private owners who make their land open to free recreational use and enjoyment by the public. Municipalities and municipal water companies own over 150,000 acres of open spaces that support recreational activities across the state. As a group, municipalities and municipal water companies are the second largest landowners in the state, ranking only behind the state itself.

The budget issues that our towns face, when coupled with the justifiable fear of liability, provide an incentive to close open spaces and to not acquire new space. The continuing need for open spaces can be seen on most any weekend when indeed it is the availability of parking that sets the limits on their usage. These open spaces are key and very popular recreational facilities that significantly contribute to making Connecticut a place where people want to live.

The Complete Streets bill which was signed into law as PA 09-154, *An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access*, created our Board. Our responsibilities, as defined by this law, include, but are not limited to, "examining the need for bicycle and pedestrian transportation, promoting programs and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians in this state, and advising appropriate agencies of the state on policies, programs and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians." Our Board looks forward to continuing its work toward a more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly Connecticut. We urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and much-needed legislation.